

Lisa Hagan
Jan. 18, 1979

Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Faculty. Sweet Briar College Archives, Room 1, bottom shelf, immediately to right of doorway.
October 27, 1911-1966, excepting the period 1952-64, the minutes for which are randomly collected in the folder labelled "Executive Committee, 1948-65."

Officially, the primary function of the Executive Committee of the Faculty was "to settle all questions concerning academic policy," a responsibility previously assigned to the faculty. However, the Executive Committee, composed of the President, the professors, and the associate professors, often found its jurisdiction extended beyond the bounds of mere "academic policy."

In the earlier minutes under consideration (1911-16), the subject matter is dominated by students' particular requests for course changes, but occasionally deals with matters of misconduct. The former are stated quite succinctly, and the latter are generally recorded only in terms of the outcome and punishment (e.g., "Miss ---'s case was found favorable.") Accounts do not reveal what one might have considered confidential.

Later minutes under consideration (1916-31) are increasingly devoted to accounts of honor and social violations, as well as to fundamental changes in curriculum. Details of students' cases are often included, but faculty opinions generally go unrecorded. Also, the minutes from 1916 onwards are, fortunately, typewritten.

The minutes are recorded within these two decades by Miss Connie M. Guion (1911-13), Miss Gay Patteson (1913-14), and Miss Eugenie Morenus (1914-31.) Miss Guion, in the course of several years, develops a rather tight pattern of report, leaving very few personal allowances. Miss Patteson is refreshingly different. Not only does she caustically comment on how a particular student missed a train connection when she had four hours to catch it, she will also use colorful qualifiers, as when she describes a student's work as "wretched." (Miss Guion would probably have termed it "unsatisfactory.") However, neither Miss Patteson nor Miss Guion intimate any disapproval of the Committee's rulings. Nor for that matter does Miss Morenus, although she comes across as a very stern character. She is usually found in the minutes taking the more severe side of an issue (she is also the more prevalent of the three in the actual minutes.)

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Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Faculty, Sweet Briar College. Fairly accurate accounts of curriculum changes, yet without the precipitating arguments. Indirect information of student life as seen mainly through its infractions. Generally restricted to matters of academic, ~~students'~~ students' particular academic problems and violations of school regulations (such regulations explained only when violated.) Information screened in regard to administrative and faculty dissension, perhaps due to contemporary Victorian discretion.